



Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards 2023

Call for Applications

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of the Free State (UFS) is pleased to call on academic and academic support staff to submit applications for the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards for 2023.

The UFS Learning and Teaching Awards recognise academic and academic support staff for their innovative learning, teaching, and support practices within different disciplines. The awards also recognise the advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the institution.

CONFERENCE THEME:

Quality Blended Learning and Teaching: Enhancing graduate attributes through assessment

In alignment with Vision 130 and the UFS Learning and Teaching Policy, which both emphasise that quality embraces evidence, innovation, and excellence, this year's conference aims to promote the sharing of ideas; best practices; and innovative approaches to blended learning¹ and assessment². Additionally, the conference focuses on the ongoing development of and investment in sustainable academic programmes that are of the highest quality, and that provide 21st-century graduates with meaningful pathways to personal and regional development.

The theme encompasses UFS learning and teaching priorities, namely blended learning, graduate attributes³, and the integration of innovative assessment methods that enhance learning in today's world. The development of graduate attributes hinges on inclusive curriculum design and assessment, which determine the value of learning and are instrumental in the measurement of quality learning and teaching. At the UFS, the aim of the graduate attributes project is to uniquely position the institution and its graduates in both the South African context and globally. The project does this by enhancing graduate employability, optimally positioning UFS students in the job market, and enhancing the quality of undergraduate education.

AIMS OF THE UFS LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS

¹ *Blended learning, "is the provision of structured learning opportunities using a combination of contact, distance, and/or information and communication technology-supported opportunities to suit different purposes, audiences, and contexts" (Christensen, Horn and Staker, 2013).*

² *"Assessment is the process of determining the value, significance, or extent of what students know, understand, and can do with the knowledge they acquired as a result of their educational experiences. It is the cornerstone of quality and excellence in higher education." (UFS Assessment Policy, 2022).*

³ *Graduate attributes, "are the qualities that are developed through the acquisition of a university degree and are seen internationally as critical outcomes of higher education" (Barrie, 2006; de la Harpe & David, 2013).*



- To promote, recognise and reward quality, innovation, and excellence in learning and teaching in the South African and UFS context;
- To generate debate and public awareness about what constitutes quality and excellence in learning and teaching;
- To share best practices, innovative ideas, and research findings related to learning and teaching; and
- To promote the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the disciplines.

CATEGORIES

The Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards are comprised of five main categories, namely:

1) **Innovation in Learning and Teaching awards**

Innovation in Learning and Teaching refers to creating an academic plan, which incorporates various innovative pedagogical, course design, and assessment strategies. This could include the integration and meaningful design of technology in learning and teaching to increase student engagement, and/or the use of various assessment methodologies, and/or curriculum transformation practices.

There are four sub-categories under this award category for which you can enter:

1.1 Innovating my curriculum through assessment

Entries in this category consider how assessment helps students reach module outcomes. This refers to the integration and use of various assessment strategies, assessment tools, and/or assessment activities (formative and summative) that form part of the overall learning and teaching strategies of the lecturer. This includes feedback practices as part of assessment that support student learning. It also considers how assessment helps students reach module outcomes.

1.2 Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation

Innovation through student engagement or motivation refers to how academics create environments that have an impact on students' motivation and/or engagement. It relates to a variety of methods and practices that create a supportive blended learning environment (both face-to-face and online) for students such as: tutorials; engaging classroom techniques; communication that is motivating; group work; and elements from universal design for learning. Theories and models of student engagement and/or motivation form the foundation of how these innovations are implemented.

1.3 Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools

Through blended and/or online teaching practices, lecturers make use of various technologies and online tools to ensure that students continuously learn. Innovation through technology shows how technologies are successfully and meaningfully implemented in learning and teaching practices. This includes various technologies (such as Blackboard, free software and other online applications). Please note that there can be an overlap between this category and the assessment and student engagement categories. The main focus of this category is on the use of *technology* or *online tools*.

1.4 Innovating my curriculum through a redesign or renewal of my module

Innovation through redesign and/or renewal of a module ensures that curricula are relevant and produce graduates that are employable in the world of work. Entries in the redesign or renewal category focus on addressing curriculum transformation issues such as graduate attributes, decolonisation of the curriculum, and the responsiveness of curricula to the changes in the environment/profession, community service-learning, community-based learning, interprofessional learning, and/or clinical learning.

**If your project seems to overlap between sub-categories, please contact us for assistance in identifying the most relevant sub-category for your application.*



2) **Research in Learning and Teaching award**

As part of the promotion of scholarly teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the UFS, this award acknowledges the valuable contributions of academics to research within the field of learning and teaching in their discipline. There are two sub-categories in this section:

2.1 Emerging: Entries should comprise a teaching philosophy, personal profile, and one accepted or published article, book, chapter, or full conference paper within any of the four Innovation in Learning and Teaching sub-categories.

2.2 Advanced: Entries should comprise a portfolio of evidence of research in learning and teaching, with examples of published articles, books, chapters, or full conference papers within any of the four Innovation in Learning and Teaching sub-categories.

3) **Vice-Chancellor's award: Learning and Teaching**

A comprehensive teaching portfolio that is evidence-based of evidence must be compiled to demonstrate all round excellence in the field of learning and teaching over a period of 5 years.

4) **Most Valued Professional award**

The Most Valued Professional recognises the contribution that academic support professionals have made to the advancement of learning and teaching at the institution. This award acknowledges dedication, innovation and excellence demonstrated by specialists in the academic support sphere. **Academic support staff are encouraged to enter for this award.**

5) **Departmental Learning and Teaching award**

The award recognises departments that have shown commitment to and involvement in improving learning and teaching through various activities and practices. This includes commitment to and involvement in the implementation of blended learning, innovative assessment, and graduate attributes.

Departments can be nominated by a Dean, Assistant Dean, Teaching and Learning Manager (TLM), or other relevant stakeholders. Departments are required to submit a portfolio of evidence (5 – 8 pages) to support their application. Aspects that will be considered include (but are not limited to): participation in learning and teaching workshops, seminars, webinars, and other related activities, as well as departmental practices in learning and teaching (such as CoP membership and institutional presentations).

**An award will be given to both a Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa department. Cross-campus departments are encouraged to include contributions from all three UFS campuses.*

OVERALL CRITERIA

- Individuals and/or teaching teams may submit an entry.
- A teaching team is a group of 2 to 4 members who worked on the same module/project to initiate change and introduce innovation.
- Cross-campus collaboration is permitted.
- An applicant (individual or team) is limited to two entries in total across all categories.



- Each entry must be unique. The same project and/or study cannot be repeatedly submitted to different categories.
- A project and/or study that has been previously entered and/or previously received awards can be submitted again for the 2023 awards as long as it has evolved and been adjusted over time, and has new updated findings and contributions.
- The selection and review process will be done by a panel of institutional as well as external experts in the field of learning and teaching. The entries for all categories will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined by the relevant rubrics.
- Rubrics for the different award categories should be used by applicants to guide the formulation of their entries.
- Reviewers reserve the right not to award a specific award.
- Submit the expression of interest form on or before **5 May 2023**, via email to Thuto Mvimbe (Mvimbetl@ufs.ac.za) so that the Academic Staff and Leadership Development team can contact you and provide assistance, training, and support where needed. You will not be excluded from submitting an entry in any of the categories if you did not complete the interest form.
- **SUBMIT COMPLETED ENTRIES** to Thuto Mvimbe (MvimbeTL@ufs.ac.za)
 - Abstracts on or before **2 June 2023** and feedback by **19 June 2023**.
 - Portfolios on or before **28 July 2023**.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**Each category's entry format is outlined below.*



THE ENTRY FORMAT

Innovation in Learning and Teaching Awards

Entries will take the format of an abstract submission for a presentation of a paper at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference. Abstract submissions will be subject to a selection process and blind peer-review. Successful applicants will then be invited to present a paper presentation at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching awards during which they will undergo a live review to determine the winner of each sub-category.

Abstracts should be between **300 and 350 words in length**.

You should **clearly** state the sub-category for which you are entering:

- Innovating my curriculum through assessment;
- Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation;
- Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools; or
- Innovating my curriculum through a redesign or renewal of my module.

The abstract should include the following:

- Introduction;
- Problem statement / Research question / Aim of the study;
- An explanation of how you approached the problem statement/research question (what is your new idea?);
- A description of how you went about doing the research (outline of methods);and
- A statement about the key impact of your research.

A team application must contain the names of all relevant participants. Clearly indicate the contact details of the team leader/contact person.

Research in Learning and Teaching Awards

Emerging:

Entries must include a learning and teaching philosophy, a personal profile, and one learning and teaching publication. This is limited to an accepted or already published:

- Article, or
- Book chapter, or
- Full conference paper

within any of the four Innovation in Learning and Teaching sub-categories. Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference. **A template will also be provided to guide applicants.**

Advanced:

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence. Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The portfolio should comprise (but is not limited to):

- A brief introduction highlighting your roles and responsibilities at the UFS;
- A description of your learning and teaching context;
- Publications (including discipline-specific and those in learning and teaching);
- Conference papers delivered (including discipline-specific and those in learning and teaching); and
- Findings and successes of your research and what they have meant for your learning and teaching context.



The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. The total narrative should not exceed 10 pages. All claims made in the narrative section need to be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed 20 pages and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the narrative. Appendices should be sensibly included. **A template will be provided to guide applicants.** The total length of portfolio should be a maximum of **30 pages**.

Vice-Chancellor's Award: Learning and Teaching

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence (teaching portfolio). Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The following information must be provided:

A brief introduction to highlight your current role and responsibilities at the UFS and your philosophy of teaching (why you teach the way you do).

The portfolio should comprise a reflective narrative on:

- Teaching approach, practice, and effectiveness;
- Promotion of student learning;
- Student development and support;
- Curriculum and course development;
- Assessment practices;
- Mentoring and coaching (pertaining to learning and teaching);
- Reflection and use of feedback to improve learning and teaching;
- Professional development and teaching recognition; and
- Research and scholarship on learning and teaching.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. If the portfolio is online, the total reflective narrative part should not exceed 10 pages. All claims made in the narrative need to be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed 20 pages and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the reflective narrative.

Appendices should be sensibly included. **A template will also be provided to guide applicants.** The total length of portfolio should be a maximum of **30 pages**.



Most Valued Professional Award

Entries will take the format of a portfolio of evidence. Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The portfolio should comprise:

- An introduction containing your learning and teaching context (what you do and why you do it this way);
- A description of your project and/or your contribution to learning and teaching; and
- A reflective narrative about your development.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. The total narrative should not exceed *10 pages*. Contributions should be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples in the narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed *20 pages* and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the narrative. Appendices should be included sensibly. **A template will be provided to guide applicants.** The total length of portfolio should be a maximum of **30 pages**.

Departmental Learning and Teaching Award

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence and will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers.

This portfolio should comprise:

- An introduction to the department, its learning and teaching philosophy, and the approach the department follows to develop learning and teaching;
- A summary of departmental staff members' participation in learning and teaching workshops, seminars, webinars, and other related activities;
- Departmental initiatives to improve and promote learning and teaching (such as learning and teaching projects, CoP membership, institutional presentations, etc.); and
- An appendices section to provide evidence of the learning and teaching activities the department has taken part in (e.g., proof of attendance, awards, conference presentations etc).

The portfolio should be **5 – 8 pages in length** (excluding the appendices) and information should be substantiated by evidence. Please note that the focus is on the department as a whole and that the portfolio should highlight the department and staff members' involvement in different training and development opportunities. **A template will be provided to guide departments** in compiling the portfolio.



LEARNING AND TEACHING REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR 2023

The review panel may consist of, but is not limited to: Faculty Teaching and Learning Managers; Academic Support Professionals; members of Management; previous award winners; and external reviewers from other national/international higher education institutions.

THE AWARDS

Up to 18 awards may be given in total across all five main categories. All award winners and runners-up will be announced at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching award ceremony, which will take place in October 2023 at the UFS.

Please note: The best Qwaqwa and the best Bloemfontein campus conference paper presentations in the Innovation in Learning and Teaching awards category, will each receive an award. The winners will be determined by the scores of the live reviews during the conference.

Winners in each category are incentivised as follows:

	1 st place	2 nd place
Innovating my curriculum through assessment	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum through a redesign or renewal of my module	R10 000	R5 000
Most Valued Professional	R10 000	R5 000

Research in Learning and Teaching award	Emerging R10 000	Advanced R10 000
Best Innovation in Learning and Teaching conference paper	BFN R10 000	QQ R10 000
Departmental award	BFN R10 000	QQ R10 000
Vice-Chancellor's award	R25 000	

****Incentives are intended to be used for research purposes and will only be paid into the recipient's research entity.***

Should you require more clarity or information regarding the awards or the conference, please contact Thuto Mvimbe (MvimbeTL@ufs.ac.za) or phone 051 401 9298. You can also direct enquiries to your Faculty Teaching and Learning Manager.



Submission and evaluation process

All abstract and portfolio entries need to be submitted according to the following deadlines:

- The closing dates for submission of entries are:
 - For expression of interest: **5 May 2023**;
 - For abstracts: **2 June 2023** (with feedback by **19 June 2023**); and
 - For portfolios: **28 July 2023**.
- Late entries will not be accepted, however, extensions will be considered in certain cases only if arrangements are made timeously. Please communicate with us before the deadline.

Entries are evaluated according to rubric criteria:

- Rubrics will be shared with applicants.
- No fewer than three reviewers are selected per category.

All presentations will be displayed on the Academic Staff and Leadership Blackboard organisation and CTL website after the awards ceremony.

Receiving of awards:

- Award winners receive their certificates at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching award ceremony, which will take place in October 2023 at the UFS.
- All applicants will be invited to the awards ceremony.
- Up to 18 awards can be given across all 5 categories. Reviewers reserve the right not to award a specific award.
- Award winners receive a monetary research incentive, which will be paid into their research entity.
- In the case of a team entry and/or tie, the award money will be divided equally between the recipients.
- Should a category only receive two entries, the reviewers may decide whether to award a second-place depending on the merit and quality of the entry.
- Award recipients are kindly requested to supply the Academic Staff and Leadership Development team with a research entity number in order to complete an entity transfer.

We look forward to receiving your submission!